

"HOUR OF DELIVERANCE DRAWS NEAR," SAYS MERCIER IN APPEAL TO BELGIAN PEOPLE TO REMAIN PATIENT

"But Has Not Struck," Prelate Tells St. Gudule Congregation in Brussels—Croud Presses to Door of Sacristy and Cries: "Long Live the Cardinal," "Long Live Liberty"

Tales Related in Report of German Spies Are Largely Fiction, Churchman-Patriot Writes Governor General Von Bissing in Defense of Address Given in Brussels on National Day

Explanatory Comment

AT THE end of the eloquent anniversary service conducted by the Cardinal in the church of St. Gudule, Brussels, on July 21, 1916, the organ proclaimed the Belgian national anthem, "La Brabanconne." It had the usual effect. The crowd could not be contained and spontaneously raised the cry of "Long live Belgium! Long live the king!"

"La Brabanconne" is quite as dear to the Belgian people as "La Marseillaise" is to the French. Both hymns celebrate liberty. "La Brabanconne," however, is exceptional among national anthems in that its original text is no longer sung. As first written the words announced enmity with the Netherlands. In a comparatively short time the bitter emotionalism of 1830 passed away. Belgium came to typify civilization with peace. It was the unique role which she sincerely played that intensified the odium attaching to the violators of her neutrality.

Charles Roger wrote the verses of the new "Brabanconne" now current. The first stanza runs as follows in the English version:

Weary wars of thrall are ended
And Belgium is free as of old;
Sav'd by her sons' heroic valor,
Her name, her flag, she will uphold.
In her might newly born rejoicing,
Her people united and free,
Emblazon on her ancient banner,
For king, for law, for liberty!

The original words were written in 1830 by Louis Decheze, a popular actor, who fought in the revolution against the Netherlands. Francis van Campenhout composed the music. He was a fairly successful musician, who had played in the orchestra of the Theatre de la Monnaie, in Brussels, and had also appeared on the stage as a tenor. Several operas, songs, choruses and some church music bear his name, but he is best known by "La Brabanconne."

Cardinal Mercier's Story

Including his correspondence with the German authorities in Belgium during the war, 1914 to 1918, edited by Professor Fernand Mayence of Louvain University and translated by the Benedictine Monks of St. Augustine's, Ramsgate, England.

[Continuation of Cardinal Mercier's address in Church of St. Gudule.]

"THE head of one of our noblest families wrote to me: 'Our son of the Seventh Regiment of the Line has fallen; my wife and I feel our hearts broken, but if need be we would gladly give him again.'

"A curate of the capital has just been condemned to twelve years' penal servitude. I was allowed to go in his cell to embrace and bless him. 'I have,' said he, 'three brothers at the front. I believe I am here for aiding my youngest brother, a lad of seventeen, to join his elder brothers; one of my sisters is here in a neighboring cell; but, thanks be to God, my mother is not alone; she has told us so; besides she does not weep.'

"Do not our mothers make us think of the mother of the Machabees? What lessons of moral grandeur! Both here and on the roads leading to exile in the prisons and concentration camps in Holland and Germany.

Preaching "Invincible Hope"

"Do we reflect sufficiently how much those brave men must suffer, who from the very beginning of the war, from the day after the defense of Liege and Namur, or the retreat from Antwerp, have seen their military career destroyed and now chafe under their inability to bear arms; those guardians of our rights and our commercial freedom, who, by their bravery, have been reduced to inactivity? There is courage in leaping to the attack; there is no less in holding back from it; there is even more virtue at times in suffering than in action. And these two years of the Belgian people's calm submission to the inevitable, this enduring tenacity which made an humble woman, before whom the possibilities of an early peace was discussed, to exclaim: 'Oh! for us there is no haste; we can still wait.' How beautiful and full of instruction for the coming generations! This is what we must consider, my brethren, namely, the magnanimity of the nation in sacrifice, our universal and persevering brotherhood in afflictions, in mourning and in the same invincible hope; that is what we must bear in mind in order to estimate our Belgian fatherland at its true worth.

"Now, the first authors of this moral greatness are our soldiers.

"While waiting until they return, when grateful Belgium will acclaim the living and crown the memory of the fallen, let us raise up in our souls an imperishable monument of religious gratitude. Let us pray for those who are no more and exclude no one from our compassion.

"The blood of Christ has flown for all. It is proba-

ble that they are expiating in purgatory the last traces of human frailty. It belongs to you to hasten their entrance into paradise. Succor the distress of the poor man who is known to you, of the poor man who is bashful. Give your superfluities to those who lack the needful. Assist at the mass which is celebrated each week in your parish church for our departed soldiers, take with you your children, get them to communicate and communicate with them.

"Pray also for those who stand ever in the line of fire! At the moment I am speaking to you, say to yourselves: Some are now in their agony, the vision of eternity has risen up before them. Let us think of them and obtain for them a holy death.

"Our soldiers are our masters," wrote recently a French academician; "they are our teachers, our leaders, our judges, our supporters, our true friends; let us be worthy of them and imitate them. To induce us not to do less than our duty, they are invariably disposed to do more than theirs."

"The hour of our deliverance draws near, but has not yet struck. Let us remain patient. Let not our courage falter. Let us leave to divine Providence the care of perfecting our national education.

"Young women and young girls, let me ask if you regard with sufficient gravity the present hour. Pray, do not show yourselves strangers to your country's mourning; there are fashions and attitudes insulting to sorrow. Modesty is for you a halo and a virtue; it is, moreover, today a patriotic duty. You also should think of the privations and endurance of our soldiers.

"Let our minds be permeated with the great law of the austerity of life. 'How much ought we not,' continues the patriot I have just quoted, 'how much ought we not, in the relatively easy conditions and in the less exposed regions which are ours and which do not merit the name of war zone, to apply our efforts to practice self-restraint, to be more simple in our life and ways, and, like our soldiers, but in our own way, to brace ourselves up to exercise more effective energy? Let us not squander a moment of our lives in amusement or relaxation. Let us not spend a minute of our lives, save for the splendid gain for which our brothers sacrifice so lovingly their own.'

Forecasts the National Independence

"And just as at the front our heroes offer us the marvelous and consoling spectacle of an inseparable union, of a military brotherhood which nothing can impair; thus in our ranks, less serried and with a more elastic discipline, we shall aim, none the less, at preserving the same cohesion, the same patriotic concord. We shall respect the truce imposed on our disputes by the great cause which alone should employ and absorb all our means of attack and fighting; and if wicked and wretched men do not understand the urgency or the beauty of this national harmony and still determine in spite of everything to foment the passions which at other times divide us, we will turn away and continue, without deigning to reply, to remain faithful to the pact of union, friendship, loyal and sincere confidence, which, in spite of them, we have made with them, under the grand inspiration of the war.

"The approaching date of the first centenary of

our independence should find us stronger, more courageous, more united than ever. Let us prepare for it by work, by patience, by brotherhood. When in 1920 we remember the dark years of 1914-1916, they will appear to us brighter, more majestic and, provided today we know how to make up our mind, they will prove the happiest and most fruitful of our national history. Per crucem ad lucem. Light springs from sacrifice."

"Long Live the Cardinal!"

At the end of the service the organ played the "Brabanconne." Up to that point the congregation, obedient to the recommendations of the Cardinal, had restrained their emotion, but scarcely had the last note of the national hymn died away than spontaneously a cry burst forth from every breast: "Long live Belgium! Long live the king!"

At the termination of the ceremony the Cardinal, according to custom, was conducted processionally to the deanery situated close to the church. The crowd pressed up to the door of the sacristy and met him with the cry: "Long live the Cardinal! Long live liberty!"

In the evening about 8 o'clock passers-by recognized the Cardinal's motorcar waiting at the gate of St. Louis's Institute. A crowd at once collected and the instant the Cardinal entered his carriage to return to Malines he was acclaimed with enthusiastic shouts by a crowd that every moment grew denser. A German officer appeared on the scene, accompanied by a detachment of soldiers, and brutally ordered a bayonet charge and several persons were wounded. The Cardinal's motorcar rapidly disappeared in the direction of Malines. The following day Lieutenant General Hurt sent a letter to the Burgomaster of Brussels from which we extract the following passages:

"When the Cardinal in the evening passed through the city in his motorcar, a demonstration hostile to the German authorities took place of such a nature to rouse the population to resistance and ill-considered acts. You must agree, sir, that no occupying power in the world could tamely submit to such provocation.

"In consequence I have suggested to the Governor General that he should inflict a fine upon the entire population of Brussels. The Governor General has agreed to my proposal and has inflicted a fine of a million marks."

The incidents that marked that day, July 24, occasioned an exchange of letters between his Eminence and the Governor General.

Government General of Belgium, Brussels.

July 24, 1916.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

Throughout the country generally July 24 passed without incident. It was only at Brussels that a demonstration took place incompatible with the regime of occupation.

This demonstration started with your Eminence yourself. The reports which have reached me inform me that during the address you delivered at St. Gudule's you expressed yourself as follows: "The hour of deliverance draws near, but has not yet struck. He who bears the responsibility of this frightful war should receive its deserts. He that let loose this storm upon Belgium must be punished."

"My dear brethren, pray for the martyrs of liberty, remain firm and unshaken in your hope, your deliverance is at hand."

"A curate of our diocese has been sentenced to twelve years' penal servitude, a nun in our holy church to six years' imprisonment. Pray for the martyrs who languish in a prison cell for having served their king and country."

"1830 * * * an historic date, when the people of Belgium wrung their liberty from their oppressors * * * after fourteen years, and a few days all the churches of Belgium will resound with the Belgian people's shouts of joy and gladness."

Before coming to a decision respecting this incident, I pray your Eminence to vouchsafe me, as early as possible, an explanation of this affair and inform me if the extracts quoted above reproduce exactly the words uttered by you. Misunderstandings have been caused in similar cases. Accordingly, I deem it important for your Eminence to communicate to me this part of your address. It would interest me especially to learn if your Eminence spoke with such certainty of the approaching hour of deliverance.

If this is so, you will kindly inform me of the grounds on which you base your assertion. Because of the importance which I attach to this fact, I should be grateful to your Eminence if you would give me a detailed account.

This incident dispenses me from answering your esteemed letter of the 12th inst. As I cannot admit the view there expressed, even if purely theoretical, I have requested the chief of my political department to reply to your Eminence.

I present to your Eminence the expression of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) BARON VON BISSING.

"Note.—This letter was published by the censored press. The above text is taken from "La Belgique" of July 24.

Mosenthal, who gave Goldman an astonishingly fine libretto for "The Queen of Sheba."

THE best pair who worked together in the grand opera were Verdi and Arrigo Boito, the latter being a man of unusual attainments both as a musician and a librettist. During his earlier years, Verdi worked with Piave, who furnished the librettos for "Ernani," "Rigoletto," "Macbeth," "Traviata," "Aida," and "Otello." But Boito, a great Shakespearean scholar, gave him the words for both "Otello" and "Falstaff," two very fine librettos.

Boito was a fine composer himself, and his opera "Medea," to which he furnished his own libretto, is on the repertoire of every great opera company of music, coupled with his thorough stage technique, an indispensable adjunct of a competent librettist, his equally great knowledge of the classic literature of several languages, and his skill in the use of words, made him the ideal librettist for the great works with which Verdi ended his career.

In fact, he practically gave up his own career as a composer to write Verdi's later librettos, evidently recognizing the greater musical talents of his friend, who, it is said, frequently consulted him regarding the music as well as the words of his operas. Boito, incidentally also wrote the libretto for Ponchielli's "Gioconda," but under the name Tobio Garro, which, it is easily seen, is an anagram of his own name.

IN ADDITION to furnishing some of the finest librettos that have ever been produced in the history of the opera, Boito left the greatest operatic mystery. He had finished a serious opera, "Nero," long before his death, which occurred last year, but it has never been produced, although promised in Italy at least a dozen years. It is said to be a remarkable masterpiece and the story of its merit has evidently lost nothing in the telling. The latest is that Toscanini will not return to this country until he has produced the work of mystery.

the best operatic composers,

Archbishop's House, Malines.
July 25, 1916.
To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor General of Belgium.

I am making it a duty to reply by return of post, as your Excellency desired in the letter No. 8713, you did me the honor to address to me on July 24th and which I received this morning. It is fortunate that your Excellency had the good inspiration to submit to me the report made to you of the discourse which I preached at St. Gudule on the 21st inst. Nothing is more fitting than that I should go straight to the point. This method, had it been always followed, would have spared us in the past the misunderstandings, the recurrence of which we are today both equally anxious to prevent.

Desirous of removing, as adequately as may be, your Excellency's anxiety, I will give in parallel columns the charges made against me in your report and the text of my sermon.

This report, containing twenty-four lines within quotation marks, puts into my mouth nine propositions. Of these nine, four are absolute fiction, one reproduces faithfully a line of my discourse, the remaining four were indeed spoken by me, but neither in the sense nor in the context given in the report.

I. Mistakes of Pure Invention

1. My dear brethren pray for the martyrs of liberty, remain firm and unshaken in your hope; deliverance is at hand.

2. A nun of Holy Church has been sentenced to six years' imprisonment.

3. Pray for the martyrs who languish in a prison cell for having served their king and country.

4. 1830 * * * a historic date, when the Belgian people wrung their freedom from their oppressors. * * * Our brave king and queen * * * will be carried in triumph * * *

5. A curate of our diocese has been sentenced to twelve years' penal servitude.

6. This I said. In fact, I said: "The hour of deliverance draws near, but has not yet struck."

7. I said: "The hour of deliverance draws near, but has not yet struck."

8. I said: "The hour of deliverance draws near, but has not yet struck."

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the teaching of the great theologian, St. Thomas Aquinas. I expounded principles the application of which each one must make for himself. This theological doctrine formulates the necessary claims of recognized justice. The author of the report only heard that and he has distorted it; but it enunciates the prohibition of hatred and the law of universal brotherhood. Thus I said: "Our lips purified by the fire of Christian charity do not give utterance to words of hatred. To hate is to make another's misfortune our object and to gloat over it. Whatever be our sorrows, we do not entertain hatred toward those who inflicted them. National concord among us co-exists with universal brotherhood, but higher than the sentiment of universal brotherhood we place respect for absolute right, without which there can be no possible intercourse either among individuals or nations."

9. In fourteen years and some days all the churches of Belgium will vibrate with shouts of "Hoch," cries of joy will be raised by the whole Belgian population.

9. I have not made any church in Belgian vibrate with sounds of cheering—neither have I spoken of "Hochs," nor of cries of joy, but of a triumph Te Deum. Even so, these are only trifling variations of style. But the report is capacious when it translates the words "in fourteen years on such a day" by "in fourteen years and some days."

This last touch proves how heedful it is to mistrust spies who understand imperfectly the language in which our preachers express themselves, and with the hope of profitably flattening German patriotism, use every expedient to catch or put in default the honest folk on whom they spy.

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THE CRITIC TALKS TO MUSIC LOVERS

Weekly Comment on Things
Musical in Discriminating
Philadelphia

THE recent death in Italy of Luigi Illica, librettist for Giacomo Puccini, will probably give that famous composer some sorrow from a professional as well as a personal standpoint, especially in view of the fact that Giacomo, the collaborator of Illica in writing librettos for Puccini, has also passed away.

From the earliest history of the opera, good librettists have been hard to find and there have been a few, but not many, cases where composer and librettist worked in perfect harmony and, moreover, with the best results. The three most famous of the Puccini librettos were those of Signor Illica, who wrote the librettos for "La Bohème," "Tosca," and "Madama Butterfly," so that it is only fair to think that some of the credit for these three works belongs also to him.

However, Signor Illica's history as a writer of librettos shows that a good composer also is necessary, for he wrote the librettos also for "La Wally," of Catalani, an opera well known in Italy and given here by the Metropolitan Opera Company some years ago, but which has since been dropped from the regular repertoire, and for Mascagni's "Iris," a work which never achieved a great success anywhere, although many believe it to be his best work.

NATURALLY, in speaking of composer and librettists who worked in absolute harmony, one immediately thinks of the matchless combination, Gilbert and Sullivan. Here was a pair to whom the enjoyment is an

pretty nearly a fifty-fifty basis. Part of this enjoyment is undoubtedly due to the fact that the operas are humorous and in a language which the audience can understand.

Few of those who attend performances of the grand opera have a sufficient knowledge of the language of the opera, whether it be Italian or French, to understand every word as they understand the English of a Gilbert libretto, but the native Italian who hears the opera gets as much pleasure from the libretto of "The Barber of Seville" or "Gianni Schicchi" as the native American gets from that of "The Mikado" or "Pinafore."

The great success of every collaboration of composer and librettist lies in the fact that words and music must fit each other, and this probably is the case with the Gilbert and Sullivan comic operas to a greater extent than with any other composer and librettist. Certainly no pair can show the same number of successes that these two have to their credit. And Gilbert's work was the equal of that of Sullivan, for it ranged from the harmless fun of "The Mikado" to the pungent satire of "Patience," which did more than any other one thing to end the dangerous aestheticism of Oscar Wilde and his imitators.

HOWEVER, good operas do not always depend upon good librettos. In fact, some of the finest musical works have been set to the most fatuous and silly words and plots. Mozart's "Magic Flute," Verdi's "La Forza del Destino," and that frightful example of what a libretto should not be, "Il Trovatore," are only three of many which might be cited.

Mozart's best librettist was Da Ponte, who provided the words for "The Marriage of Figaro" and "Don Giovanni," but it was always a mystery to Beethoven how Mozart could set such wonderful music to such librettos. Beethoven himself had unlimited trouble in getting a satisfactory libretto for an opera, but after many years of trying took "Fidelio." He made a lot of trouble for his friends over the matter, for the language of one of Victor Schuber's celebrated "arias" he

Next Week's Events

Sunday, Jan. 4.—Free concert, Academy of the Fine Arts, 3 p. m. morning musicals, Bellevue-Stratford, 11 a. m.; John McCormack, 8 p. m.; Boston Symphony, Academy of Music, 8:15 p. m.; Emilio Gilelli, 8 p. m.; Edwin Evans's vocalists, 8 p. m.; Grand opera, "La Juive" (Caruso and Ponselle), Metropolitan, 8 p. m.; "The Barber of Seville" or "Gianni Schicchi" as the native American gets from that of "